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Mahathir-Entrepreneurs

DR MAHATHIR TELLS BUMI ENTREPRENEURS TO STOP DEPENDING ON GOVT CONTRACTS

PETALING JAYA, Aug 6 (Bernama) -- Bumiputera entrepreneurs must stop depending solely on the government to buy their goods because such a market is limited and it is not the way to do business, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said that bumiputera entrepreneurs must focus on the open market, which is the real market and which can help them improve the quality of and demand for their goods.

"I find that bumiputera entrepreneurs need assurance from the government to buy their products and this is not 100 per cent business," he said when opening the two-day National Women Entrepreneurs Convention 2002, here.

Dr Mahathir said that although such a business was risk-free and did not require good and efficient management, it would not help its development.

"The entrepreneurs must avoid being too dependent on the government to buy their products. Instead, they should try to market their goods to the public within and outside the country," he added.

Later, at a media conference, he said 100 per cent of the bumiputera contractors depended on government contracts and in the absence of government contracts "they are not competitive enough".

"Even with the (government) contracts, they are not able to compete among themselvesd.

"How can quality and efficiency be improved if there is no competition among the bumiputera entrepreneurs," he said.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir also touched on the lack of locally produced souvenir items on sale at tourist centres because of the inability of locals to mass produce such items.

"I'm very sad that at tourist spots like those in Pulau Langkawi the souvenir items sold are mostly made in Thailand, Taiwan, China and the Philippines," he said.

"You can't find anything that's made in Malaysia," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that manufacturers of souvenirs and handicraft items must switch from the old methods which depend on individual skills to machines which can mass produce.

The government would also revive the "one village one product" project for the small industries in villages which had been earmarked, he said.

The project would be managed by a manager and full-time workers using machines to ensure that the goods produced were of quality and met the market demand.

Previously the project was run at home by small-time operators during their free time.

Dr Mahathir said such project, which was started in Japan, had proven successful in Thailand.

Among the goods to be produced were machine-embroidered towels which had a big local market, he said.

He also stressed the importance of work ethics and culture to succeed in business.

He said that besides efficient management, they must practise a business culture based on good values, trustworthiness and honesty, especially in managing the company's funds.

"To become entrepreneurs, they must know the field they want to venture

into and understand the ethics and culture, besides having management efficiency and knowing the market demand and how to control production costs," he said.

Stressing the importance of good financial management to ensure success of the business, Dr Mahathir said entrepreneurs who succumbed to greed upon seeing a lot of money for the taking, although the company was their own, could be considered criminals.

-- BERNAMA

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